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AUTHOR Buchanan, Christy M.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

The decision to divorce is grueling for most parents, who usually worry heavily about the impact of divorce on their children. The study described in this book was undertaken to discover what circumstances of family life after divorce are associated with good adjustment on the part of children, so that both parents and professionals can enhance children's development. Specifically, a central concern was to compare and contrast the three major residential arrangements (primary mother-, primary father-, and dual-residence) with respect to adolescents' experiences and adjustment. Effects of the presence of new parental partners were also explored. The book is divided into three main parts. Chapters 1-3 set out the goals and methods of the study and discuss the assessment of family processes, inter-parental relationships, and adolescent adjustment. A general picture of the lives of the study's adolescent subjects is also presented. Chapters 4-7 compare the three residential arrangements with respect to adolescent adjustment, as well as the contextual factors, interpersonal relationships, and forms of parental control and management that prevail in each. Chapters 8-12 explicitly examine the experience of participating in two different parental households, including visitation, the relationship with the nonresidential parent, feeling conflicted, and inconsistency in households' patterns of control and management. Finally, chapter 13 summarizes the main findings and considers their implications. The summary indicates only minor differences among the three residential groups, on the average, in adolescent adjustment. What differences there were favored the adolescents in dual residence, and indicated somewhat more adjustment difficulties among father-resident adolescents. Contains 153 references. (EV)